

GKM PUBLIC AFFAIRS & LIAISON FUNCTION TRANSITION PLAN

BACKGROUND

As response activities transition from emergency operations to long-term response activities, Public Affairs will undergo a parallel transition in its field operations in support of unified incident command in Durango. The Joint Information Center from a full-time staffed organization by local, county, state and federal PIOs to a virtual organization on August 24, 2015. With the demobilization of the State Emergency Management Office PIO as JIC lead, the La Plata County assumed the responsibility for the Gold King Mine Blog and social media (Facebook and Twitter) accounts. The county has decided to no longer update these accounts.

EPA assumed the responsibility for the local media telephone line which has been forwarded to our HQ OPA general press telephone number at 202.564.4355. EPA also assumed responsibility for the local community hotline which has been forwarded to EPA's contractor operated Gold King Mine Incident community hotline at 844.607.9700. The virtual JIC continued to operate with two daily check-in calls a day until Sept. 9 when it was agreed that the JIC would discontinue operations in support of the GKM unified incident command in Durango. An EPA public affairs unit was established to support Unified Incident Command at the closure of Unified Area Command and forward Incident Commands in Farmington and Aztec, NM. The EPA public affairs unit will demobilize on Sept. 18.

During the next phase of the transition to post-response, Region 8 has established a GKM Working Group. The R8 GKM Working Group will coordinate efforts on 1) the long-term monitoring strategy, 2) working with the State and local communities on long-term remediation strategies, and 3) actions still emanating in response to the spill (e.g., treatment at the mine heading into the Winter, and legal issues related to the spill). It is also my expectation that all work and decisions relevant to the GKM in the Region will be vetted through the R8 GKM Working Group, and that the Working Group will ensure proper coordination with HQ and any relevant partners. The R8 GKM Working Group will include designees from public affairs and congressional/intergovernmental.

TRANSITION

1) Media/Site visits – EPA revised the Site Visit Plan (Attached). Site operations will take priority; be aware that visitations may not be allowed due to operational constraints or weather conditions. In general, if planned operations at the mine would need to cease during the visit then the request will not be approved by EPA.

2) Media Inquiries – Media inquiries are submitted to press@epa.gov for tracking and response by EPA. Media inquiry management will transition to the HQ Office of Public Affairs. OPA will assign inquiries to the appropriate office/region for response or respond directly as appropriate.

3) Meetings/Public Engagement – Requests for community meetings and presentations regarding GKM mine response activities will be managed by the Region 8 GKM Working Group in coordination with HQ Office of Public Affairs.

4) Congressional Requests and Inquiries – Responses to Congressional requests for information will be closely coordinated by the Region 8 GKM Working Group with HQ OCIR and OGC including future CODEL

requests to visit the mine.

5) Press Release/Advisory – HQ Office of Public Affairs will generate and issue press releases to update the media on availability of data, information and public documents. HQ OPA has assumed the GKM media list for distribution in addition to VOCUS distribution. Regional offices will distribute releases/advisories as appropriate.

6) EPA Gold King Mine website – Region 8 Working Group with the support of the national web team and OPA will oversee the management of the GKM website.

7) Toll-Free Community Call Center – HQ OGC contractor will operate the GKM toll-free community hotline for two years. Region specific inquiries will be forwarded for response and follow up as outlined in the guidelines (Attached).